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For Immediate Release

FCC PROPOSES ACTION TO IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE OF WIRELESS EMERGENCY ALERTS

Proposal Would Expand Multilingual Alerting and Set Performance Benchmarks

WASHINGTON, April 20, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed rules to improve Wireless Emergency Alerts by making them available in more than a dozen languages, adding increased functionality, and ensuring that participating wireless providers send the alerts in a reliable, accurate, and timely manner.

In a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking adopted today, the Commission proposed to:

- Require participating wireless providers to ensure that mobile devices can translate alerts into the 13 most commonly spoken languages in the U.S. aside from English. The Notice also seeks comment on whether and how WEA might support American Sign Language and text-to-speech.
- Enable alert originators to send thumbnail-sized images in WEA messages, which would be particularly helpful in AMBER Alerts, as well as links to location-aware maps, which would enable the public see where they are in relation to an emergency situation.
- Enable alert originators to send WEA messages without the attention signal, which may be useful in situations where a sound could give away the location of a person in hiding or cause annoyance that spurs consumers to opt-out of WEA.
- Provide the public with the option to receive alerts without the attention signal, which could also prevent unnecessary opt-outs.
- Support WEA public awareness exercises by enabling alerting authorities to send two test alerts per year that the public receives by default.
- Establish WEA reliability, accuracy, and speed benchmarks to improve performance.
- Create a WEA database and require participating wireless providers to supply information on whether they offer WEA, where they offer WEA, and which WEA-capable devices they sell, as well as information on their WEA reliability, accuracy, and speed. The Notice also seeks comment on any alternative approaches to WEA performance reporting.
- Establish minimum performance requirements for WEA reliability, accuracy, and speed that participating wireless providers must satisfy.

Taken together, the Commission’s proposals would help public safety officials keep their communities safe during emergencies and provide all stakeholders, including the public, with more information on how WEA is performing in their area.

Action by the Commission April 20, 2023 by Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (FCC 23-30). Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioners Carr, Starks, and Simington approving. Chairwoman Rosenworcel issuing a separate statement.

PS Docket No. 15-91, 15-94

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).